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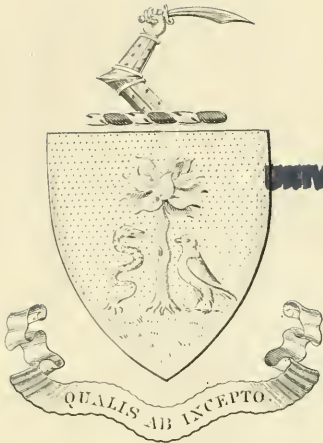
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Weeping-Cross



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A. H. Bullen

Weeping-Cross and other Rimes

by

A. H. Bullen

London

Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd.

1921

A. H. BULLEN

TO the many who knew him only as the incomparable editor of old plays, the re-discoverer of lost or forgotten lyrics, the wise and wide-ranged Sylvanus of the Note-Books, it may come as a surprise to learn that his lip, too, was free of the Muse's wine. At the end of a troubled life it was sorrow taught him to sing, and these, his nurslings of Warwickshire fields and hedges, were born of a profound sadness, the sadness of a loving, lovable, yet wholly misunderstood man.

I can see him now, dog at heel, leisurely pacing the rough green ridges of the great field that leads to Shottery, while chanting under his breath some tag or end of song, just as some unhappy child will sing, to cheer itself and make believe this is a glad rather than a sorry world : so it was that all the verse in this little book was made. He first crooned to me " By Avon Stream " in the gathering dusk of a summer evening, asking almost incredulously : " Do you really think it good ? " For generous in his appreciation of other men's work, meticulous in criticism of his own, he never asked more than the rhymer's dole, and had not poverty kept house for him, " Weeping-Cross " would have ended as a light for his pipe, or found burial in the waste-paper basket.

To give with both hands was his one idea of

happiness, and as, like menacing figures, the dark days of hopelessness and failure closed round about him, Christmas, instead of a joyful feast, became an evil nightmare, for he had nothing to give to his friends. So December, 1916, saw issued from the Shakespeare Head Press, Stratford-on-Avon, "The Willow," a thin volume, bound in vellum coloured paper, the edition being limited to twenty-five copies. In December, 1917, came another thin volume, this time a larger edition of thirty copies, and the eight lines, "Weeping-Cross," that gave the book its title, tell the story of its author's life far better than any biography, however lovingly or carefully compiled, will ever do. Some day "The Willow" and "Weeping-Cross" may find their way into the great sale rooms and their possession be eagerly disputed by bibliophiles from over-seas ; but it was only at the earnest request of three friends that at last he consented to consider the re-printing of these booklets, together with sundry scraps of verse, written at odd moments and in varied moods. Asked to add some others, his answer was : " See how people like them ; if they do, I can easily write more."

Among his manuscripts and papers I have found yet other fragments, scribbled on the backs of bills and of used envelopes ; notably " Senex Loquitur," where he tells us he has heard his call. " Light o' Love"

was one of his favourites ; " Mid-May " is unfinished, but many will be glad of it. His translations should please the general reader, as well as content the scholar ; one of these, " Runaway Gold," was printed some years ago among the Notes to an edition of Anacreon ; the rest are all new. I have followed throughout his original order of precedence that ended with " God's Beasts " : for the additional verse I am alone responsible.

Reading through the letters (carefully preserved) from those friends to whom he had sent " The Willow " and " Weeping-Cross," it seems as though their genuine praise is likely to prove a lasting verdict. " I am delighted with ' Weeping-Cross,' with its wisdom, and its music, and its scholarship," writes one well-known critic. " I am amazed. I had no idea you had ever written verse, and lo, these full-blown flowers of poesy ! Their Elizabethan flavour is exquisite, not depending on accidentals, but because of the very spirit of them," says a leisured man of letters. Surely no future Anthology of English Verse will be reckoned complete that does not include " Weeping-Cross," and the criticism that holds most of truth is this single sentence from a notable Greek scholar : " I thank you, Thrush ! " For it is all singing verse, but those who did not know the man who made the " rimes " will miss the music given them by that golden voice of his that

(as tradition has it of Virgil) added a beauty, subtle, elusive, indefinable to every line he spoke.

John Masefield writes to me : " I have been trying to collect my memories of him for you, but the haze of this war comes in between us, and I cannot get them distinct. I saw him under two conditions ; the one in London, where he was always among scholars and writers, in rooms in the Inns of Court, or in dark supper-rooms in the Strand, talking of Elizabethan books and people much as though they were alive in the streets outside, like the time come back. The other conditions were in Stratford, where I only saw him twice, both times in Spring-time. And my memory of him is of his overflowing welcome of good-will and kindness. I see him with his great fluff of hair that made him so like Mark Twain, and that rather high ' A-ha ' of welcome that was so characteristic. Then I remember there was sunshine both times, and he was delighting in the Spring and in being in Stratford, so near to where Shakespeare knew the Spring. All this memory of him is mixed up with the feeling of the Spring in that divine country, the Cotswolds just going green, and the daffodils going over, and the lambs in the fields, and the wall-flowers in the stones of the walls. These memories are among the pleasantest I have. But I have been counting up, and it is seven years since I saw him."

Those seven years had done much in the way of change ; those bitter years of war, when the help he offered (he, who would gladly have laid down his life for England) was refused again and again by the people who did not understand. Instead of the brightness of the Spring, my memory of him has for background the saddened loveliness of Autumn; of its darkening fields, its fruited trees, its yellowing leaves, its grey mists half hiding the guardian hills, and that curious, indescribable smell of the ageing earth that tells of the coming of winter and of possible partings. Always dressed in some kind of rough frieze, he himself had become a very part of the landscape, and, for many, the great field that leads to Shottery will long be haunted by his gentle ghost.

It was on the morning of the twenty-ninth of February, 1920, that he was sitting up watching the dawn, a dawn of singular beauty, while a robin sang in the bare-branched trees under his window, when I quoted from his own poem, "Hestiaeus Ponticus" :

*" And ah, how seldom have these eyes,
Beheld the glorious morning rise."*

At once he corrected me. " And ah, how seldom have mine eyes " : then, with that humorous smile

of his that lighted up the whole face, he said :
“ Don't make it worse than it is.” A few hours later
the end came suddenly.

“ Kindly Crinagoras ” of whom he sang, will not
repel him, and he will be more at home among the
poets and philosophers of a golden past, than ever
he was in the dun-coloured stir and traffic of this
restless age. “ A Church and State man,” he loved
to call himself, and those of us who knew he only
worshipped towers and spires from a far distance
would keep a questioning silence when he repeated
his creed. But among his best-thumbed books were
the writings of the Fathers, and Origen, Clement of
Alexandria, Irenæus, Lactantius, Augustine, Ter-
tullian, and Gregory, became at last almost
as familiar friends as Lucretius, Propertius,
Theocritus, Euripides, Plato, Athenæus, Aulus
Gellius, and all the singers and “ gossip gleaners ”
of the older creeds and less sombre habit of life.
Greek he read for pleasure, and Latin when he could
not find a translation to his liking, and would turn
a passage without effort into finished verse or
balanced prose for those who either never had, or
else had forgotten, the learned tongues. He was
before all else, a simple-minded man ; simple in
his habits, and contented with simple pleasures—
talks and walks with friends, the companionship
of his dog and of the books that were to him as

well loved children : " Mid-May " is no fancy picture, but a piece of autobiography.

One of the dearest of his unfulfilled dreams was to see Greece, and he had often spoken with George Gissing of the journey they would one day make there together. But poverty held him tied at home, and all his voyaging was done on winter nights by his own fire-side, when he would devour books of travel with the lusty appetite of a schoolboy. He never wholly lost the boy's sense of wonder and love of adventure, and no matter the country—China or Peru, Central America, the South Sea Islands, or the Great African forests—the very name alone would draw him, as with a spell. But yet it was England that he loved, with just such a passion as the Elizabethans loved her. English fields, English hedgerows, English woods and sleepy streams made up his heaven of out-of-doors, and I doubt if any other setting would have suited him one half so well.

All his hopes and dreams were disappointed, save one—to lie at last in a country churchyard far from towns and men. Luddington is a tiny village, and its churchyard, within sound of the lapping waters of the Avon, a very home of peace. To-day, for some of us :

“ Luddington guards dearer dust
Than Omar's shrine.”

M. T. D.

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WEEPING-CROSS

WITH bold heart, high-aspiring aim,
Forth fared he in the morning gray,
To storm the Citadel of Fame
And win a crown of fadeless bay :
Ungarlanded, at day's decline,
Ruefully weighing gain with loss,
When neither moon nor star did shine,
Homeward he stole by Weeping-Cross.

11th November, 1917.

CAPTAIN DOVER AND THE COTSWOLD GAMES

[“ Captain ” Robert Dover, 1575-1641, an attorney, migrated from Barton-on-the-Heath to Stanway, in the Cotswolds. He founded the Cotswold Games—sometimes styled the “ Olympick Games ”—in 1604 and continued to preside over them till his death in 1641. *Annalia Dubrensis*, a collection of poems by various hands (famous and obscure) in praise of Dover and descriptive of the games, appeared in 1636 ; 2nd ed. by Dr. Thomas Dover, in 1700 ; reprinted by Grosart and others in recent times. The hill where the Games were held, near Chipping Campden, is still called “ Dover’s Hill.” Excellent cyder is made in the neighbourhood. “ Dover Castle ” was a wooden erection that turned on a pivot ; an umpire’s observation post, fitted with culverins.]

By Dover’s Hill are orchards fine
With golden apples gleaming,
And there was crusht the juice divine
That sets us all a-dreaming.

*Fill up, fill up
Each lad his cup
With foxwhelp brimming over,
And drink with me
To the memory
Of gallant Captain Dover !*

The Cotswold Games for voice and pen
A worthy theme afforded ;
By Randolph, Heywood, Drayton, Ben
Were Dover's deeds recorded.

Folk rode at quintain ; they wrestled ; they hurled ;
With cudgel and staff they battled ;
'Twas the merriest, maddest sport in the world
When the raps round their sconces rattled.

Broad quoits were whirling or gamesters keen
Their luck at bowls would be proving ;
And archers trim in Lincoln Green
At butts were pricking and roving.

Some fell to barley-brake and some
Their Irish-hays were dancing ;
The Morris tripped it to bagpipe and drum,
And *Wyhy* ! came hobby-horse prancing.

Now racing nags swept over the field
With a musical mirthful clatter ;
While from Dover Castle the culverins peeled
A volley the welkin to shatter.

And Captain Dover, admired of all,
With ruff and yellow favour,
His white horse rode majestic,
Not the Persian Sophy graver.

Oh, rich and rare his accoutrement
As he rode in the Whitsun weather,
For the King from his own wardrobe had sent
The cloak, the beaver, and feather.

.

For two score years with mickle praise
He at the Games presided,
Then stooped to Fate ere civil frays
The hapless realm divided.

Yet lives he unforgotten still
In Cotswold rime and story ;
His kindly phantom haunts the hill
Where once he rode in glory.

My song is done, my throat is dry,
There's liquor yet before us ;
So once again lift glasses high
And sing we all in chorus—

*Fill up, fill up
Each lad his cup
With foxwhelp brimming over,
And drink with me
To the memory
Of gallant Captain Dover !*

THE WILLOW

OLD Christian Fathers laud the willow tree
As type and pattern of virginity :
Yet ten short moons ago on osier bed
Strephon woo'd Chloe, and so well he sped
That now of willow wands a cradle's weaving
For their love-babe ; and sorely Chloe's grieving.

THE ALMOND TREE

WHEN ne'er a bud in brake or breere
Durst February's front oppose,
The Almond, spurning coward fear,
In all her blossom'd bravery shows :
So forward buds of England's youth,
Who with the valorous Almond vie,
Nurselings of Righteousness and Truth,
The blustering foe's rude threats defy.

THE OAK

“ DODONA’S oaks were through the world renown’d.”
Their riddling answers oft did men confound.

“ Our Dryads were to mortals ever good.”
Your Druid altars smoked with human blood.

“ We saved your second Charles from dread mishap.”
King David’s son you caught in deadly trap.

“ In oaken pulpit parsons preach’d and pray’d.”
From oaken gibbet poor folk swung and sway’d.

“ Rare banquets on oak-board were richly spread.”
Oak-coffins were the revellers’ last bed.

“ Who carried Drake through strange uncharted seas?”
Be all your faults forgot, heroic trees !

THE BEECH

MENALCAS from the Dogstar's rage
 'Neath shady beech sought cool retreat
And, envying nor king nor sage,
 Piped blithe at Amaryllis' feet—
Once in the happy Pastoral Age.

No warlike drum was then to hear !
 With beechen cup and beechen platter
Shepherd and nymph made simple cheer ;
 They'd tell old tales and gaily chatter,—
He knew no guile, she knew no fear.

In hollow beech-bole bees would hive,
 While dormouse on his garner'd heap
Of nutty kernels well did thrive,
 And squirrel 'mid beech-branches leap :—
Great Pan, 'twas good to be alive !

THE LIME

IN childhood's day with wondering delight
I watched you spring so comely, tall, upright :
Methought of all the trees I'd ever seen
Was none whose leaf matched yours for living
green.

And when at blossom-tide a fragrance rare
Flew from your flow'ring boughs through tranced
air,

The strange bewitching charm me so amazed
That my weak childish wit was well-nigh crazed.

At school I came in Ovid's page to know
Of Baucis and Philemon, long ago
Who high Jove entertain'd and Maia's son,
When poor simplicity rich guerdon won ;
For in extreme old age, on selfsame day,
By grace of Jove they put off outworn clay,
And—he to oak, she changed to lime—they
stand
By a fair temple in far Phrygian land.

JESSAMINE AND BIRCH

“ THE golden jessamine looks rare
Beside that cottage door :
Who'd guess that anything so fair
Our bleak December bore ? ”

So I : well-pleased he stood to mark,
Then on the frozen road
A league and more through gathering dark
At brisker pace we strode.

All-suddenly the moon's full face
Shone clear without a smirch,
And upsprang—miracle of grace—
A silver-plumèd birch.

Then he : “ December, fools will say,
Is bankrupt of delight ;
Yet jessamine flaunts gold by day,
And birch o'ersilvers night ! ”

BY AVON STREAM

THE jonquils bloom round Samarcand.—
Maybe ; but lulled by Avon stream,
By hawthorn-scented breezes fanned,
'Twere mere perversity to dream
Of Samarcand.

A very heaven the Javan isle !—
Fond fancy, whither wilt thou stray ?
While bluest skies benignant smile
On Avon meads, why prate to-day
Of Javan isle ?

The bulbul 'plains by Omar's shrine.—
But still I hold, and ever must,
Lark's *tirra-lirra* more divine ;
And Stratford Church guards dearer dust
Than Omar's shrine.

21st May, 1916.

AGEING HOPE

As I still older grow,
Still do my cares increase :
God grant, ere hence I go,
A few brief hours of peace,
That, vexed no more by blows
Of Fortune's felon spite,
I draw to journey's close
In tranquil fading light.

If prayer be idle breath,
And hope yield to despair,
To welcome kindly Death
I'll my sick soul prepare.

LOOKING FORWARD

“ AFTER the war,” I hear men say,
“ Never a war will be.
A League of Nations will bear sway
O'er earth and sky and sea.”

Ah, but if e'er should dawn a day
By Fate's malign decree,
When England lies the sport and prey
Of crazed Democracy !

Better unending battle-fray,
So English hearts be free,
Than mutely wear to dull decay
In ignobility.

September, 1918.

GEORGE CANNING

CANNING, the saddest of the sad,
The gayest of the gay !
A wiser statesman ne'er we had :
Would you were here to-day !

“ PORT AFTER STORMIE SEAS ”

PALLADAS OF ALEXANDRIA

WITH Hope and Fortune I have closed the score ;
The harbour's reached ; they'll cozen me no
more :
Poor, but with freedom housed, away turn I
From wanton wealth that mocks at poverty.

Anthol. Palat. ix. 172.

UNREST

How good 'twill be to dream,
When winter nights come soon,
By firelight's cheery gleam !
I'd ask no better boon.—
Lo, now the winter night
Has come ; the fire's aglow :
Dream then and hug delight :
Freely, my fancy, flow !—
Woe's me ! I hear the wind
Moan, like a child in pain :
Sad thoughts torment my mind :
Ah for the soft June rain !

A WELCOME IN WAR-TIME

(Louise, born 22 January, 1917.)

FROM distant unknown star
She comes to troubled earth,
In days of wasting war,
Much dolour, little mirth :
Strange time to choose for birth !

O Mary Mother, guard
The small adventuring wight ;
Angels, keep watch and ward
Over her, day and night,
That naught may her affright.

Ah may she live to see,
When desperate strife shall cease,
In happier days to be,
As faith, hope, love increase,
The radiant reign of Peace !

TO CAPTAIN L— F—.

(On the death of his friend, 2nd Lieut. L— J—).

YOUR friend is kill'd, and you're heart-broken :
Alas ! what's here to say ?
No word that e'er was writ or spoken
Can 'suage your grief to-day.

So young he was, so frank, clean-living,
A very maiden-knight ;
He seem'd a gift of God's own giving :
And now you're plunged in night.

“ Him to have saved I'd gladly perish ! ”
Vain cry ; 'twas will'd that he
Should pass, and you be left to cherish
A stainless memory.

But your undying souls were plighted,
And surely—late or soon—
Somewhere they will be reunited
In lands beyond the moon.

RUNAWAY GOLD

[Anacreontea, LVIII. The original is more than usually corrupt ; I have rendered part of it, but towards the end the text becomes hopeless.]

WHEN with soft and viewless feet
Like the wind and no less fleet,
Flies me, as he flies away,
Gold, that arrant Runaway,
I pursue not ; who is fain
To hunt home a hateful bane ?
Free from Runaway Gold, my breast
Is of sorrow dispossess :
I, to all the winds that blow,
All my cares abroad may throw :
I may take my lyre and raise
Jocund songs in Cupid's praise.
When my wary sprite disdains
To be trapp'd by Runaway's trains,
Suddenly he hies unto me
And with trouble would undo me ;
Hoping that himself I'll take
And my darling lyre forsake.
Faithless Gold, thy labour's naught ;
By thy snares I'll not be caught :
More delight than Gold doth bring
I can gain from my lute string.
Thou men's hearts didst sow with guile
And with envy them defile ;
But the lyre.

EPICHARMUS' COUNSEL

BE wary ; practise incredulity
Which makes the soul subtle and sinewy.

TO CRINAGORAS OF MITYLENE

WHEN in Elysium I shall seek out those
Who've much delighted me in verse or prose,
Kindly Crinagoras, I will never rest
Until I find your shade among the Blest ;
And sure I am that you will not repel
Me who have loved you long and loved you well.

LAIS GROWN OLD

Secundus

I, LAIS, who aforetime was a dart
 To pierce men to the heart,
Lais no more, Time's Nemesis am now,
 Mark for each censuring brow.
By Cypris—(now of Cypris what know I
 Save name for swearing by?) —
E'en Lais' self no longer Lais' eyes
 To-day do recognise.

“ HAD I WIST ”

“ BEWARE of *Had I Wist* : ” the proverb’s old,
Yet wilful youth still grasps at phantom gold :
Ah, had I ta’en the wholesome saw to heart,
What ills had I been spared, what bitter smart !

LUCK AND WISDOM

Θέλω τύχης σταλαγμὸν ἢ φρενῶν πίθον

Philosophers may boast and brag,
But I say with the Grecian wag,
“ A tun of wisdom I’d give up
For one sip from Good-Fortune’s cup ! ”

HESTIÆUS PONTICUS

OLD Hestiæus, learnèd dunce,—
 (So Grecian gossips tell the story)
Through all his lifetime never once
 Saw the sun rise or set in glory :
Over his scrolls he'd constant pore
To pack his pate with curious lore.

Hail, sage of Pontus ! you and I
 Were surely bred at Dullheads' College :
While the green light's in western sky,
 I'm searching books for useless knowledge !
And ah, how seldom have mine eyes
Beheld the glorious morning rise !

4th October, 1918.

GOD'S BEASTS

“ God’s beasts are we,” learn’d Doctors hold,
And beasts ne’er dread the fall of night :
When shades of death would us enfold,
Why quail we in the waning light ?
The dark, pleasaunce of ancient peace,
Welcome to all and each will give ;
To dote on garish toys we’ll cease,
And then at last begin to live.

23rd September, 1918.

LIGHT O' LOVE

I LOVED yon Hawthorn passing well,
So late the pride and crown of May ;
“ There's naught,” I swore, “ that can excel
Hawthorn for scent and rich array : ”

Now fickle I
My oaths reny
And vow these starry elder-flowers—
For fragrance rare,
Hue fresh and fair—
Put down all gaudy Hawthorn-bowers.

Since I have once falsed faith, I fear
My restless fancy will be ranging
And still, as older grows the year,
Old loves for new I shall be changing :
Soon Eglantine
Her wreaths will twine
And Elder-flowers no more be seen,
Then without shame
I will acclaim
Lush Eglantine the Summer's Queen.

4th June, 1918.

SOUTHEY'S COMMON-PLACE BOOK

WHEN doggèd discontent doth me oppress
(Begot—and born—I know not when or how),
And all life looms one forlorn wilderness
Without or singing bird or blossoming bough,
These well-loved tomes then take I from the
shelf,
And my dull sprite, that lumpish care dismayed,
Is quickly dancing, gay as wanton elf
That laughs and leaps in moonlit forest glade.

CORINTH

Antipater of Sidon

O DORIAN Corinth, where is now thy dazzling
beauty ? where
Thy crown of towers, thine ancient store of treas-
ures rich and rare ?
Where are thy fanes and palaces ? Where the
Sisyphian wives ?
Of all thy thronging myriads, alack, what now
survives ?
City of sorrows, ne'er a trace of thee is left to-day :
War hath confounded thee, his teeth have eaten
all away ;
We Nereids of Ocean's race alone from scathe
are free,
Abiding here—with halcyon strains to wail the
woe of thee.

Anthol. Planud.

THE WHISPERER

STILL by meadow and stream
When I saunter and muse and dream,
A mocking whisper I hear—
“ Old Age draweth a-near.”

When fancy would be weaving
Gay hopes for my deceiving,
The Whisperer bids “ Remember :
Rake not a dying ember.”

TO A. L.

If it be Fate's decree
That England's day is done,
What's left for you and me
To act beneath the sun ?
Over the shining lea
Carols the careless lark,
But we are for the dark—
 If it be Fate's decree.

Man's life, e'en at the best,
Is but a doubtful boon :
When life hath lost all zest
Ne'er comes the end too soon :
For us be dreamless rest !
Who'd suffer endless wrong,
Who'd shameful life prolong—
 Life, a poor boon at best !

March, 1918.

PALLADAS

NAKED to earth I came, naked 'neath earth
descend :

Why do I vainly toil since naked is the end ?

A FRAGMENT

You saw him yesternight, you say,
That long-dead hunchback in the cowl
Down Monk's Walk take his lonesome way ;
You heard the screeching of the owl ;
From Moat Farm came the watch dog's bay ;
The waning moon looked on, ascowl . . .

MID-MAY, 1918

I

It shall not me dismay
That I've grown old and grey ;
Nor tell-tale glass I chide
That will not wrinkles hide :

The visionary gold
That in my heart I hold,
Doth far in worth outshine
All metal from the mine.

II

Of folios I've a store :—
Angelic Henry More,
Lov'd Fuller (wittiest sage)
And Burton's magic page :

There Pliny, Plutarch stand,
Here's Hakewill to my hand
And thy once far-famed screed,
Apocalyptic Mede.

III

But till the winter eves
Bide there, old printed leaves !
Here's Field o'th' Cloth of Gold
With buttercups untold :

Tall chesnut-candles flare,
Hawthorn makes rich the air,
And tireless cuckoo—hark !—
Calleth from dawn to dark. . . .

THE MIDDLE NIGHT

YOU'VE told how waking, in the middle night
You turned your longing arms to left and right
In love's embrace ; alas ! she was not there
And you lay lonely in your dazed despair.

“ THE DOG KNOWS ”—*Tourgenev*

THERE is no help : I shivering must go
O'er dismal fields through the poached mire and
snow.

“ Then why submit to such a cheerless task ? ”
Yon pitiless imploring collie ask.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

THE honey-throated nightingale, our Musa the
blue-eyed
This narrow tomb claimed suddenly where she
doth voiceless bide :
For all her art and all her fame, stone-still she
lies to-day :
And over thee, our Musa fair, light lie the dust
for aye.

CALLIMACHUS

THEIR Crethis, with her prattle and her play,
The girls of Samos often miss to-day :
Their loved workmate, with flow of merry speech,
Here sleeps the sleep that comes to all and each.

THE UNKNOWN

OLD am I grown and grey,
No girl will look at me :
I hear them sigh and say :
 “ Alas, to think that we
 May come like him to be ! ”

Minxes, I scorn your pity :
There's one who loves me well,
A lady, beauteous, witty,
Who doth you all excel :
Some day her name I'll tell.

THE RIVERS

“ BELOVÈD Master, tell us how we may
To Happiness and Wisdom find the way ?
How shall we get winged souls wherewith on high
Through the bright beams of heavenly truth to
fly ? ”

“ Go seek the Rivers Four of Paradise,
And bathe therein, and you'll grow good and
wise.”

“ The Rivers Four ! fain would we learn from thee
What names they bear and what their virtues
be ? ”

“ The first named Pison, signifies Foresight ;
The second's Gihon, 'mong men Justice hight :
Hiddekel third, is Courage firm and fast,
Euphrates (Temperance) is the fourth and last.
Bathe, and your cleansèd souls mounting the sky,
Through sun-bright beams of heavenly Truth
shall fly.”

So Zoroaster taught, ages ago ;
Nor better counsel I to-day can show.

SENEX LOQUITUR

RIGHT glad, in sooth, am I
That my time comes to die,
For fled is honest mirth
From our distempered earth ;
Envy and greed and strife
Stain the clear well of life,
And each succeeding morrow
Brings a new tale of sorrow.
Mayhap for younger eyes
Hereafter will arise
An England fair and free
Laughing from sea to sea ;
But for my fading sight
Cometh no vision bright.
So, tired of dust and noise,
From earth's vain gawds and toys
To my long home I'll pass
Beneath the quiet grass.

APPENDIX

[*Publishers' Note.*—The following verses, though outside the canon of “Weeping-Cross and other Rimes,” are reprinted from the prefatory matter to A. H. Bullen’s privately-issued “Selections from the Poems of Michael Drayton,” 1883.]

TO DOROTHEA

DEAR little maid with laughing eyes,
Wistful, wilful, winsome, wise,
Fain would I lightly poetise
 In stanzas cheery ;
But days are short and nights are long,
And shrill winds pipe a restless song,
Complaining of the wide world's wrong
 In accents dreary.

Ah ! welladay ! the mist and rain
Drive rudely over hill and plain ;
December hurries up amain
 With drum and tabor ;
But blown to left and blown to right
Scared birds that cannot keep their flight
Drop, baffled and outwearied quite
 By battling labour.

We cannot speed the blust'ring hours,
Or quell the angry Winter's powers,
Or bring the sunshine and the flowers
 We love so dearly ;
But we can sing and we can play,
And we can make the dullest day
As merry as the lark in May
 That carols clearly.

Sweet baby mine with hair of gold,
List to a song was sung of old,
A story of Pigwiggen bold
 On earwig prancing ;
Of Oberon with threat'ning mien,
And gamesome Puck, and Mab the Queen,
And lightfoot elves by moonlight seen
 On greensward dancing.

And you must love the singer well
Who knew such dainty tales to tell ;
'Faith, Michael Drayton bears the bell
 For numbers airy.
The garden-ways are blank and bare ;
Come from the window, draw the chair
Nearer the fire, and we'll repair
 To Court of Fairy.



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